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TAGS: PREL KUNR PHUM UN ADCO CI

SUBJECT: CHILE SUPPORTIVE ON UN REFORM INITIATIVES

REF: A. STATE 0746

¶B. STATE 0745

Classified By: Ambassador Craig Kelly for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker told the Ambassador on January 11 that Chile generally supported U.S. positions on administrative reform, the creation of the Human Rights Council, and the development of the Peace-building Commission. Walker stated Chile would continue to work closely with the U.S. and others to move these processes forward. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Ambassador called on FM Walker on January 11 to deliver reftel demarche on U.S. objectives for United Nations reform. Director of Multilateral Affairs Pedro Oyarce accompanied Walker. Poloff accompanied the Ambassador.

Human Rights Council

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¶3. (C) Walker agreed the reputation of the UN Commission for Human Rights (CHR) had been badly damaged. He said this was an unacceptable situation, which could not be allowed to continue. Walker stated the key to creating an effective Human Right Council (HRC) was to "raise the standard." Requiring a 2/3 majority vote to elect individual candidates and instituting a peer review for HRC candidates would be positive steps. Walker noted that Chile and others envisioned a slightly larger HRC than the U.S. proposed, possibly as many as 45 members to ensure regional representation and balance.

¶4. (C) Walker said Chile would cooperate with the U.S. to achieve a rapid resolution on the composition of the HRC, as "our positions are quite close." However, Walker expressed doubt the process would be completed by March. Oyarce noted that the UNCHR was meeting in Geneva, and said supporters of the HRC hoped to have an idea of the way forward by the end of January. Oyarce said a transitional body was under discussion.

Administrative Reform and Mandate Review

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¶5. (C) Walker said Chile was also a strong supporter of administrative reform. The Oil-for-Food scandal had been a yellow warning light that put the UN's administrative flaws in the spotlight. Walker added he supported the idea of mandate review, and said UN mandates should be subject to time limits. At the same time, the reform process had to be constructive. Walker noted, "many shots have been taken at the Secretary General," whom he characterized as "a good person and effective leader."

¶6. (C) Oyarce said administrative and budgetary problems were hurting the UN's political efficacy, underscoring the critical need for reform. However, administrative reform enjoyed less support than other initiatives -- like the HRC and Peace-building Commission. Oyarce explained Chile was working in the Fifth Committee on administrative reforms, adding that Switzerland was leading on best practices, and Thailand was playing a positive role in laying the technical groundwork for reforms. The Ambassador noted that reform would allow more resources for priority projects like UN support for elections. Walker agreed that prioritization, not auto-pilot, is the key.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador said the three Palestinian-related bodies were ripe for mandate review, noting they were outdated, biased, and detracted from the UN's role in the Quartet process. Walker said the issue was not strictly financial, asserting that Israel's "unilateral approach" to security arrangements and Palestinian relations complicated the issue.

KELLY